

HUNTLEY POOR RELIEF, 1830-1841

The records relating to Huntley include the accounts of the overseers of the poor from 1829. These accounts are very detailed until 1835 when Huntley joined the Westbury on Severn Union. After 1835 the Huntley records are much more brief but the Westbury Union minute books give some further information.

In 1834 major changes were made to the poor law. There was a feeling that too many people were receiving relief and the idea of introducing workhouses as a test of need was accepted.

The general principle was that paupers would be forced to enter the workhouse if they required relief. Short-term relief in such cases as illness was to be given outside the workhouse but this was to be carefully controlled. Parishes could group together to form Unions and build workhouses. Outside relief was to be given in goods rather than money wherever possible.

It was possible from the Huntley records to look at five year periods before and after the Poor Law changes. The change of accounting systems took place in October 1835, half way through the 1835/6 accounting year and so this year has been excluded from the figures used in comparison. It was hoped that by studying the periods 1830-1835 and 1836-1841 the effect of changes of legislation on one parish could be identified.

The overseers were responsible for raising a rate and collecting this from all eligible parishioners. They made a number of regular payments to persons on a weekly basis in addition to ad-hoc relief. It was of interest to all in the parish to keep the level of relief as low as possible so that fewer rates would need to be levied. In Huntley there were usually three rates levied in each year.

The amounts collected during this period were:-

1830	-April 1831	- £157	by three rates
1831	-April 1832	- £210	by four rates
1832	-April 1833	- £157	by three rates
1833	-April 1834	- £231	by five rates
1834	-April 1835	- £164	by three rates

In the 1834 year five rates were needed to raise the sum required. Three rates of 1d. in the £ and two of 6d. in the £ making a total rate of 1s.3d. but still the year ended with a debt by the parish to the overseers.

It is perhaps interesting to look in some detail at the persons who received regular relief throughout this period 1830-35.

Sara Billingham - received relief of 3s. per week.
The 1841 census lists a Sarah Billingham
as Independent living with John Watkins

and his family and then aged sixty. The burial register entry in 1863 mentions Huntley Common and gives an age of eighty-nine.

- Richard Ellis - received relief of 3s. per week. The burial records show him to have been a widower aged ninety-six at the time of his death in 1837.
- Mary Fowle - received 2s.6d. per week until February 1835. The burial register entry for 30 January 1835 lists her as a widow aged ninety-two.
- Jos Collett - received 2s. 6d. per week and there are also entries for lodging Joseph Collett and his wife with payments to Richard Green. Joseph was recorded as aged ninety-one in his burial entry in November 1839.
- Eliz Vaughan - received 2s.0d. per week and according to the 1841 census lived alone on Huntley Hill although she was then shown as aged ninety-five. She was buried in August 1842 and recorded as Elizabeth Vaughan aged ninety-eight.
- Ann James - also received 2s. per week. The burial (shown at one stage as Jaynes) entry in March 1850 states 'resident in Blaisdon' aged ninety-four years'.
- John Fowle - Also received 2s. per week. His burial entry in July 1863 shows him to have been 'resident in Westbury Union - aged 87 years'.
- John Drinkwater - received 2s. and Pheobe Dean received 1s.6d. per week but no further details have come to hand on these two persons.
- Thomas Steel - started receiving payments in 1830 and is shown in the later period as a resident in the Westbury Union Workhouse as an 'aged person'.
- John Parsons - received 1s. per week from 1830.
- Mary Brown - received 2s. per week at the commencement of the period but this ceased on her death. The burial entry of August 1828 shows her to have been a widow aged eighty-one. There are also entries for:-
- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Mary Brown's funeral | 6s. |
| R. Merrett for M. Brown's coffin | 17s. |

Other regular expenditure items are expenses in visiting Newnham and signing rates and charges for letters. It would seem that the magistrate conducted his business at Newnham for visits there were frequent. The constable's bill was paid from the poor rates and also an item marked 'bridge money'. The bridge money varied from £10. 12s. 10d. in

1834/5 to £20. 1s. 8½d. in 1831/2 and in 1829 there is an entry for 1s. for 'taking the Bridge money'. The bridge money would seem to have been a quarterly charge and is the largest single item in any year. It may well include other items otherwise regarded as part of the county rates.

Payments for medical services to Mr. Hollister, Dr. Beadle and Mr. Abbott averaged at an annual cost of £7. A regular payment of £1. 10s. Od. was made for 'Rent of the Poor House'. Until 1834 this was paid to Thomas Marshall and thereafter to Mr. Morse.

A number of cases were the subjects of settlement examinations with varying results as the entries show:-

- Paid turnpike to bring J. Watkins to Littledean	2s.
- Orders of removal and other expenses	10s.
- Paid for orders for Wm. Gwilliam	10s.6d.
- Ann Wilks for lodging Gwilliam	3s.
- Ann Wilks for lodging Gwilliam	3s.

Following an entry in 1832 for 2s. 6d. payment for bringing J. Goode to the parish, 3s. relief was paid. A later entry shows Mr. Abell - one of the medical advisers - was paid £1. 18s. Od. for attending Joseph Goode and a further £1. 12s. 10d. was expended on lodgings, letters and other expenses in 1833.

Entries for ½ bushel of flour 5s. 6d. and lodgings 12s. relate the relief given to Samuel Kerton in 1830 prior to his death. He was aged seventy-eight.

Items paid to 'Lodge at Worcester' terminate in May 1833 thus:-

- Paid for the funeral of T. Lodge at St. Andrews Church Worcester, £1. 14s. Od. Paid the Overseer of Parish of St. Aldgate for the support of The Lodge, his wife and family who were removed by order	£2. 10s. Od.
- Doctors bill for the same	£2. 14s. 4d.

Regular items were paid to the parish of St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, for R. Hayward and wife and seem to represent relief of 3s. per week throughout the period studied.

Hannah Goode was the subject of expenditure over a period:-

Sept. 1832	Paid Mr. Hail for attending H. Goode	10s.
Aug. 1833	(Examination of Hannah Goode at Newnham	1s.
Aug. 1833	(A warrant for apprehension of J. Cowles for bastardy	2s. 6d.
Aug. 1833	(Paid for a bed cord for H. Goode	1s.
Nov. 1833	(Mrs. Hail for attending Hannah Goode	10s.
	(Mrs. Drinkwater for shop goods for (H. Goode during her lying in month	16s.

The baptism register shows an entry for William son of Hannah Goode of Huntley, single woman, on 3rd October 1833.

Feb. 1834	A bedstead for H. Goode	5s.
Mar. 1834	Paid for H. Goode at the Lion	18s.
Apr. 1834	(Coal for H, Goode	12s. 6d.
	(Mr. Uzzell for waiting on	
	(H. Goode	£1. 0s. Od.
	(Mrs. Drinkwater for H. Goode	19s. 1d.

The burial register contains two entries:-

4th April 1834 - William Goode aged six months
 5th May 1834 - Hannah Goode Spinster aged twenty-four.

1835 Paid Mr. Baker for Hannah Goode's coffin £1. 0s. Od.

The accounting year 1835/6 records the changes made due to the Poor Law legislation of 1834. Until October 1835 the old system continued but then the accounts are totalled to date and continue with considerably fewer entries. The new entries include regular payments to the treasurers of the Union for Huntley then joining the Westbury-on-Severn Union. Only such items as county rates, postage and expenses before Magistrates now appear as individual expenses as all others are paid by the Westbury Union.

The Huntley overseer collected the following amounts by rates:-

1836 - April 1837	- £105 by two rates
1837 - April 1838	- £209 by four rates
1838 - April 1839	- £145 by two rates
1839 - April 1840	- £192 by three rates
1840 - April 1841	- £187 by four rates

The minute and account books for the Westbury Union show how the monies paid to them were spent. Huntley paid about £145 each year and if the year 1838/9 is taken as a guide this was spent on the following basis:-

In Maintenance - provisions	£14. 0s. Od.
In Maintenance - clothing	£ 1. 0s. Od.
Establishment charges	£29. 0s. Od.
Out relief	£94. 0s. Od.
Loan interest	£6. 0s. Od.

The number of Huntley persons in the workhouse varied but never exceeded five. In June 1838 there were four:-

Thomas Steel - aged
 Eliz. Stephens - aged
 Charles Watkins - orphan
 Thomas Watkins - orphan

In August 1835 Huntley had paid £6. 0s. Od. to the Taynton workhouse for the board of Chas and Thos Watkins and a further 2s. 8d. for mending their shoes. A later entry shows a further £4. 7s. 8d. paid to Taynton. Presumably they were transferred to Westbury when the Union was formed. In September 1836 only Thomas is listed as an inmate but by December he too had left.

Elizabeth Poyner spent some time in the workhouse prior to her removal:-

1839 - Examination and information of Eliz Poyner with order of removal, duplicates and notices etc. from Huntley to Leigh £1. 1s. 6d.

Expenses incurred in removing Eliz Poyner and child from the Westbury Workhouse to the Leigh 13s.

The Huntley baptism register shows an entry on 1 November 1835 - Eliza daughter of Elizabeth Poyner - single woman.

In 1835 £4. 4s. Od. was paid to the Deaf and Dumb Institution at Edgbaston near Birmingham for the board of Henry Clarke. In August 1836 the board ordered a further £10. 5s. 6d. to be paid and after reading a letter from the Secretary to the General Institution for the instruction of Deaf and Dumb Children, Edgbaston the board ordered that Henry Clarke should be returned from the institution to his parish of Huntley. Henry Clark spent sixteen days in Westbury workhouse and the following is recorded in the board minutes:-

Nov. 1836 - 'Henry Clark a deaf and dumb boy having been removed by the order of this board from the Institution at Edgbaston to Westbury Workhouse resolved that in consideration of the extraordinary care he has received and the progress he has made at such place he should be sent back with the thanks of this board to the Governors and Managers of such an excellent Institution.'

Out relief was clearly the largest item of expenditure in Huntley's case but unfortunately the relieving officer's books have not survived.

The board meeting minutes give us some insight of the day to day working of the Union and occasionally details of some Huntley person. In March 1836 there were fourteen outdoor paupers receiving relief and by September this number had increased to seventeen although the indoor paupers now only numbered two. (Thomas Steel and Thomas Watkins, the first aged and the other orphaned) Throughout 1837 only one pauper was maintained for Huntley indoors and this would appear to have been Thomas Steel.

The board arranged to pay items to other boards where due for Huntley. Chipping Sodbury Union was paid 4s. per week for Robert Morley and family until he was able to work in 1839. Payments were also made to the Newent Union in respect of Richard Jaynes, his wife and two children.

In 1840 the medical officer's certificates were entered in the minutes when relief had been granted. There are a number for Huntley and they give some idea of the circumstances under which relief would be granted.

April 1840 - Thomas Merrett - 38 - Labourer
Reason - Wife's confinement
Period - uncertain
(The baptism register shows Mary Ann
daughter of Thomas and Mary Merrett
born March 29)

April 1840 - Samuel Haynes - 55 -
Reason - Fever

May 1840 - Sarah Ballinger
Wife of Willm. Ballinger - Labourer
Reason - Labour
Notes - The woman is going on very well
but is ver poor.-
Tea 2oz. Sugar 1lb. Oatmeal 1lb.
(The baptism register shows William son of
William and Sarah Ballinger born 2 May 1840)

By this time there were five indoor paupers from Huntley and concern for medical matters was increasing. The boards medical officers requested some additional rooms for the care of the sick. The medical officers were contacted to vaccinate 'all persons in the Union who shall apply' and by July 1841 Abell and Hearne reported thirty-five successful vaccinations from Huntley.

Further medical certificates are entered:-

Nov. 1840 - John Read - Labourer
Reason - Rheumatism
Notes - oatmeal

Martha Bradley - forty-five
- Acuphuld.

July 1841 - Geo. Brooks - thirty-five - Hostler
Reason - Sickness Erysipilus and Typhus Fever
Notes - $\frac{1}{4}$ pint Brandy.

Despite the changed methods of giving relief the amount of money spent does not seem to have decreased during the period studied. Under the old Poor Law arrangements the largest proportion of the money was spent on regular payments to elderly people. A detailed analysis of relief under the new arrangements is not possible due to the lack of relieving officers' books but the minutes show that only one of the elderly persons was admitted to the workhouse. There would appear to have been room for more people than needed accommodation in the early years of the Union and this leaves the question of what became of the remainder of those previously receiving regular relief. Persons living on Huntley Hill form a high percentage of those receiving relief until 1835 and the records that exist for the later period suggest that this situation did not change.

In 1805 there were eighty-six persons paying tithes but by 1841 this had increased to one-hundred and sixty-nine. If one takes this as a guide to the number of persons contributing to poor relief and allows for paupers and other exemptions it can be seen that the amounts paid were

sufficient to induce interest in the use to which the monies were put. Without the relieving officers' books it is not possible to show how individuals were affected but certainly the new Poor Law did not ease the burden of the poor rate for those living within the Huntley parish.

J.M. EASTWOOD

SOURCES

Glos.R.O., P184/OV 2/1, Huntley overseers of the poor accounts
Glos.R.O., G/WE 8a/1, Westbury-on-Severn Poor Law Union
Minutes
Glos.R.O., P184/IN 1/3, Huntley baptism and burials register.